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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/726,979	12/03/2003	Clifton Lind	988.1035	5074

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EXAMINER

THOMAS, ERIC M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3714

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	04/16/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/726,979

Applicant(s)

LIND ET AL.

Examiner

Eric M. Thomas

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 June 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

EMT

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

This office action is in response to the amendments filed on 6/30/06; claims 11, 12, 14, and 16 have been amended. Claims 1 – 20 are now pending in the current application.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the “right to exclude” granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

Claims 1-4, 7-11, & 14-16 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double "patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 3, 7-10, 12, 16-18, 21-22, 28, & 34-36 of U.S. Patent No. 6,802,776.

Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each " other because the subject matter of the conflicting claims is similar and, at times, almost identical in phrasing and terminology. The claims are not patentability distinct from one another because it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to implement a similar bingo game with a plurality of game play requests associated with respective players and request multiple bingo cards in order to provide multiplayer bingo system with multiple ways to win. One would be motivated because a multiplayer bingo system allows for players to enjoy a bingo game in a traditional setting.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) The invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) The invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lind et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0111207).

Claims 1 & 8: Lind et al. disclose the same invention including a method comprising the steps of: (a) matching a first set of game designations with a set of bingo card representations to produce a matched card set, the matched card set including a number of game play records with each game play record corresponding to a different one of the bingo card representations and including a result indicator indicating a result of the match between the first set of game designations and the respective bingo card representation; (b) receiving a number of game play requests, each respective game play request being associated with a respective player and a respective bingo card representation from the set of bingo card representations; and (c) for each game play request, assigning the respective player the game play record corresponding to the respective bingo card representation with which the respective player is associated (claim 1 & paragraph 0049). Lind et al. also disclose a program product Stored on a Computer readable medium, wherein the program product stores the program code to execute the above steps (claim 10).

Claim 2: Lind et al. disclose assigning game play records from the matched card set until a game winning player holds a game play record corresponding to a matched bingo card representation

- having a game ending pattern; and withdrawing (i.e. disregarding) the matched card

set from play in response to the assignment of the game play record corresponding to the matched bingo card representation having the game ending pattern (claim 3).

Claim 3: Lind et al. disclose matching an additional game designation set with the set of bingo card representations to produce an additional matched card set, the additional matched card set including a number of respective additional game play records with each additional game play record corresponding to a different one of the bingo card representations and including a result indicator indicating a result of the match between the additional game designation set and the respective bingo card representation (claim 7, paragraph 0074, & paragraph 0079).

Claim 4: Lind et al. disclose receiving an additional game play request associated with a given player who has already, been assigned a respective game play record from the matched card set, the additional game play request also being associated with a respective bingo card representation from the set of bingo card representations; and assigning the given player the additional game play record corresponding-to the respective bingo card representation with which the given player is associated (claims 7-9).

Claim 5: Lind et al. disclose assigning additional game play records from the additional matched card set in response to a game play request which next follows a game play request for which is assigned a game ending game play record (paragraphs

0054 & 0055).

Claim 6: Lind et al. disclose assigning game play records from the matched card set for a set period of time and then assigning additional game play records from the additional matched card set after that set period of time (paragraphs 0054 & 0055).

Claim 7: Lind et al. disclose 7. The method of claim 1 further including the steps of: (a) matching a number of additional game designation sets with the set of bingo card representations to produce a number of additional matched card sets, each additional matched card set including a number of respective additional game play records with each additional game play record in a given one of the additional matched cards, sets corresponding to a different one of the bingo card representations and including a result indicator indicating a result of the match between the respective additional game designation set and the respective bingo card representation; and (bi storing each additional matched card set so that respective additional game records are available for assignment in response to a respective game play request.

Claim 9: Lind et al. disclose game ending play monitoring program code for detecting when a player has been assigned a game play record corresponding to a matched bingo card representation having a game ending pattern; and matched card set switching program code for switching to a different matched card set when the winning play monitoring program code detects that a player has been assigned the

game play record corresponding to the matched bingo card representation having the game ending pattern (claim 12).

Claim 10: Lind et al. disclose the matching program code matches an additional game designation set with the set of bingo card representations to produce an additional matched card set, the additional matched card set including a number of respective additional game play records with each additional game play record corresponding to a different one of the bingo card representations and including a result indicator indicating a result of the match between the additional game designation set and the respective bingo card representation (claims 16 & 17).

Claim 11: Lind et al. disclose the game play assignment program code responds to a game play request from a given player who as been assigned a game play record from the matched card set by assigning the given player an additional game play record from the additional matched card set, the assigned additional game play record corresponding to the respective bingo card representation with which the given player is associated (claims 18, 28 & 34).

Claim 12: Lind et al. disclose the game play assignment program code assigns a respective additional game play record from the additional matched card set in response to a game play request which next follows a game play request for which is assigned a game ending play record from the matched card set (paragraphs 0054. &

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0055).

Claim 13: Lind et al. disclose the game play assignment program code assigns game play records from the matched card set for a set period of time and then assigns additional game play records • from the additional matched card set after that set period of time (paragraphs 0054 & 0055).

Claim 14: Lind et al. disclose a gaming system comprising: (a) a number of player stations, each player station for enabling a player to initiate a game play request and for displaying results of a game play upon receipt of a game play record, each game play request initiated by a player being associated with the initiating player and with a respective bingo card representation in a set of bingo card representations; (b) a central processing system for storing a set of game play records, each game play record corresponding to a respective bingo card representation which has been matched to a first set of game designations, the central processing system also for assigning a respective game play record from the set of game play records to a player in response to a game play request initiated by the respective player at one of the player stations, the respective game play record assigned to the player being the game play record corresponding to the bingo card representation that is associated with that player; and (c) a communications system operatively connected to the central processing system and to each of the player stations for facilitating communications between the central processing system and each player station (claim 35, figure 3, &

paragraphs 0030-0041 that describe figure 3).

Claim 15: Lind et al. disclose the central processing system stores a number of additional sets of game play records, each game play record in a respective additional set of game play records corresponding to a respective one of the bingo card representations which has been matched to an additional set of game designations; and the central processing system also assigns a respective game play record from one of the additional sets of game play records to a player in response to a game play request initiated by the respective player at a respective one of the player stations, the respective game play record assigned to the player from the additional set of game play records being the game play record in that additional set corresponding to the bingo card representation that is associated with that player (claim 36 & paragraphs 0030-0041).

Claim 16: Lind et al. disclose the matched card set includes a game ending game play record corresponding to a bingo card representation from the set of bingo card representations and wherein the central processing system withdraws the matched card set from play in response to the assignment of the game ending game play record (claims 2, 3, 21 & 22, note: the central processing system is the hardware that handles the withdrawing or disregarding of cards).

Claim 17: Lind et al. disclose a gaming floor component for directing a bingo card request to the central processing system in response to a bingo card request entered for a respective player, and wherein the central processing system responds to the bingo card request by associating a respective bingo card representation from the bingo card representation set with the respective player for whom the bingo card request kaput was entered (paragraphs 0010, 0042, & 0048).

Claim 18: Lind et al. disclose the gaming floor component comprises one of the player stations (paragraph 0048).

Claim 19: Lind et al. disclose a point of sale terminal distinct from the player stations and wherein the gaming floor component comprises the point of sale terminal (paragraph 0041).

Claim 20: Lind et al. disclose the central processing system is also for maintaining a database correlating each of a number of respective players to one or more bingo card representations with which the respective player is associated (paragraphs 0037-0039).

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Lind et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,802,776).

The applied reference has a common inventor with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) might be overcome either by a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor(s) of this application and is thus not the invention "by another," or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131.

Claims 1 & 8: Lind et al. disclose the same invention including a method comprising the steps of: (a) Matching a first set of game designations with a set of bingo card representations to produce a matched card set, the matched card set including a number of game play records with each game play record corresponding to a different one of the bingo card representations and including a result indicator indicating a result of the match between the first set of game designations and the respective bingo card representation; (b) receiving a number of game play requests, each respective game play request being associated with a respective player and a respective bingo card representation from the set of bingo card representations; and (c) for each game play request, assigning the respective player the game play record corresponding to the respective bingo card representation with which the respective player is associated (claim 1 & column 9, lines 42-60). Lind et al. also disclose a program product stored on a computer readable medium, wherein the program product stores the program code to execute the above steps (claim 10).

Claim 2: Lind et al. disclose assigning game play records from the matched card set until a game winning player holds a game play record corresponding to a matched bingo card representation having a game ending pattern; and withdrawing (i.e. disregarding) the matched card set from play in response to the assignment of the game play record corresponding to the matched bingo card representation having the game ending pattern (claim 3).

Claim 3: Lind et al. disclose matching an additional game designation set with the set of bingo card representations to produce an additional matched card set, the additional matched card set including a number of respective additional game play records with each additional game play record corresponding to a different one of the bingo card representations and including a result indicator indicating a result of the match between the additional game designation set and the respective bingo card representation (claim 7, column 17, lines 6-15, & column 18, lines 33-49).

Claim 4: Lind et al. disclose receiving an additional game play request associated with a given player who has already been assigned a respective game play record from the matched card set, the additional game play request also being associated with a respective bingo card representation from the set of bingo card representations; and assigning the given player the additional game play record corresponding to the respective bingo card representation" with which the given player is associated (claims

7-9).

Claim 5: Lind et al. disclose assigning additional game play records from the additional matched card set in response to a game play request which next follows a game play request for which is assigned a game ending game play record (column 10, line 53 - column 11, line 30).

Claim 6: Lind et al. disclose assigning game play records from the matched card set for a set period of time and then. Assigning additional game play records from the additional matched card set after that set period of time (column 10, line 53 - column 11, line 30).

Claim 7: Lind et al. disclose 7. The method of claim 1 further including the steps of: (a) matching a number of additional game designation sets with the set of bingo card representations to produce a number of additional matched card sets, each additional matched card set including a number of respective additional game play records with each additional game play record in a given one of the additional matched cards sets corresponding to a different one of the bingo card representations and including a result indicator indicating a result of the match between the respective additional game designation set and the respective bingo card representation; and (b) storing each additional matched card set so that respective additional game records are available for

assignment in response to a respective game play request.

Claim 9: Lind et al. disclose game ending play monitoring program code for detecting when a player has been assigned a game play record corresponding to a matched bingo card representation having a game ending pattern; and matched card set switching program code for switching to a different matched card set when the winning play monitoring program code detects that a player has been assigned the game play record corresponding to the matched bingo card representation having the game ending pattern (claim 12).

Claim 10: Lind et al. disclose the matching program code matches an additional game designation set with the set of bingo card representations to produce an additional matched card set, the additional matched card set including a number of respective additional game play records with each additional game play record corresponding to a different one of the bingo card representations and including a result indicator indicating a result of the match between the additional game designation set and the respective bingo card representation (claims 16 & 17).

Claim 11: Lind et al. disclose the game play assignment program code responds to a game play request from a given player who as been assigned a game play record from the matched card set by assigning the given player an additional game play record from the additional matched card set, the assigned additional game play record

corresponding to the respective bingo card representation with which the given player is associated (claims 18, 28 & 34).

Claim 12: Lind et al. disclose the game play assignment program code assigns a respective additional game play record from the additional matched card set in response to a game play request which next follows a game play request for which is assigned a game ending play record from the matched card set (column 10, line 53 - column 11, line 30).

Claim 13: Lind et al. disclose the game play assignment program code assigns game play records from the matched card set for a set period of time and then assigns additional game play records from the additional matched card set after that set period of time (column 10, line 53 - column 11, line 30).

Claim 14: Lind et al. disclose a gaming system comprising: (a) a number of player stations, each player station for enabling a player to initiate a game play request and for displaying results of a game play upon receipt of a game play record, each game play request initiated by a player being associated with the initiating player and with a respective bingo card representation in a set of bingo card representations; (b) a central processing system for storing a set of game play records, each game play record corresponding to a respective bingo card representation which has been matched to a first set of game designations, the central processing system also for

assigning a respective game play record from the set of game play records to a player in response to a game play request initiated by the respective player at one of the player stations, the respective game play record assigned to the player being the game play record corresponding to the bingo card representation that is associated with that player; and (c) a communications system operatively connected to the central processing system and to each of the player stations for facilitating communications between the central processing system and each player station (claim 35, figure 3, & column 5, line 44 - column 7, line 64 which describe figure 3).

Claim 15: Lind et al. disclose the central processing system stores a number of additional sets of game play records, each game play record in a respective additional set of game play records corresponding to a respective one of the bingo card representations which has been matched to an additional set of game designations; and the central processing system also assigns a respective game play record from one of the additional sets of game play records to a player in response to a game play request initiated by the respective player at a respective one of the player stations, the respective game play record assigned to the player from the additional set of game play records being the game play record in that additional set corresponding to the bingo card representation that is associated with that player (claim 36 & column 5, line 44 - column 7, line 64)..

Claim 16: Lind et al. disclose the matched card set includes a game ending game play record corresponding to a bingo card representation from the set of bingo card representations and wherein the central processing system withdraws the matched card set from play in response to the assignment of the game ending game play record (claims 2, 3, 21 & 22, note: the central processing system is the hardware that handles the withdrawing or disregarding of cards).

Claim 17: Lind et al. disclose a gaming floor component for directing a bingo card request to the central processing system in response to a bingo card request input entered for a respective player, and wherein the central processing system responds to the bingo card request by associating a respective bingo card representation from the bingo card representation set with the respective player for whom the bingo card request input was entered (column 3, lines 17-39, column 7, lines 65 - column 8, line 11, & column 9, lines 20-40).

Claim 18: Lind et al. disclose the gaming floor component comprises one of the player stations (column 9, lines 20-40).

Claim 19: Lind et al. disclose a point of sale terminal distinct from the player stations and Wherein the gaming floor component comprises the point of sale terminal (column 7, lines 54-64).

Claim 20: Lind et al. disclose the central processing system is also for maintaining a database correlating each of a number of respective players to one or more bingo card representations with which the respective player is associated (column 7, lines 10-42).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed on 6/30/06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant respectfully request that the nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection of claims 1 – 4, 7 – 11, and 14 – 16 be withdrawn because the “776 claims do not teach or suggest all of the limitations required by Applicant's claims.” The examiner respectfully disagrees. However, as discussed above and noted in previous office action, although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the subject matter of the conflicting claims is similar and, at times, almost identical in phrasing and terminology. Applicant also alleges that no portion of the specification show the limitations of independent claims 1, 8, and 14. The examiner also respectfully disagrees on this particular situation by basically after reviewing both inventions; the specifications are almost exactly the same word for word, therefore the nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection will not be withdrawn.

Applicant also alleges that claims 1 – 20 are not anticipated by the Lind reference nor the “776” patent. The examiner respectfully disagrees. Regarding independent claims 1, 8, and 14 the Applicant states that the “776 patent does not disclose or

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suggest that each game play request is associated with a respective bingo card representation" and it also does not mention "assigning a particular player the game play record corresponding to the respective bingo card representation that is associated with the particular player." However, the "776" patent states that the central computer receives information from various gaming floor devices in a respective group, which leads to the central computer receiving game play requests from the devices in the group and sends record information to the respective device (col. 6, lines 52 – 64). The "776" patents also teaches that the central computer allows players to participate in the games available by purchasing bingo card representations through his or her corresponding game play records (col. 8, lines 1 – 11). Therefore, the game system taught by the "776" patent provides the limitations of the claimed invention. Thus, the examiner maintains the "776" renders the claimed invention anticipated.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Eric M. Thomas whose telephone number is (571) 272-1699. The examiner can normally be reached on 7a.m. - 3p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Xuan Thai can be reached on (571) 272-7147. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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Ronald Pearson
Primary Examiner
4/12/07